

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OMB-01 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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R 041425Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 238
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 0136

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR EG SY
SUBJ: EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN RAPPROCHEMENT

REF: DAMASCUS 0019 (NOTAL)

1. WELL-INFORMED EGYPTIAN ARAB LEAGUE OFFICIAL GAMIL MATTAR
WHO MARRIED TO SYRIAN INTELLECTUAL,
EXPRESSED "PERSONAL" VIEWS ON EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN RAPPROCHEMENT
TO POLCOUNS JANUARY 4 THAT SUGGEST IT CONSIDERABLY LESS SUBSTANTIAL
AND PERHAPS LESS DURABLE THAN OFFICIAL VERSIONS INDICATE.
MATTAR SAID HE THOUGHT BILATERAL AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED
PRIMARILY ON STRATEGY TO BE FOLLOWED TO GET TO GENEVA, INCLUDING
TACTICS ON HOW TO ATTEMPT TO BRING ALONG PALESTINIANS, BUT
IMPLIED THAT ASAD CONSIDERABLY LESS SANGUINE THAN SADAT ABOUT
PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS. MATTAR BELIEVES DIFFERENCES PROBABLY
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CONTINUE TO EXIST BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT ON FOLLOWING
SUBJECTS WHICH COULD JEOPARDIZE RAPPROCHEMENT AT ANY TIME:
LEBANON, PLO, SOVIET UNION AND RICH ARAB STATES.

2. ON LEBANON, MATTAR DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT ANY CLEAR UNDERSTAND-
ING WAS WORKED OUT. IF SYRIANS RUN INTO DIFFICULTY OR GO TOO
FAR IN ESTABLISHING THEIR HEGEMONY, EGYPTIANS MIGHT REACT.

SIMILARLY, HE DOWNS NOT BELIEVE AGREEMENT REACHED ON RELATIONSHIPS WITH PLO AND RESPECTIVE ROLE OF EACH STATE. POSSIBILITY EXISTS THEREFORE THAT GOE AND SARG WILL EACH CONTINUE TO WOO PALESTINIAN LEADERS AND VIEW FOR DOMINANT POSITION WITHIN PLO. ON EACH COUNTRY'S RELATIONS WITH USSR, MATTAR SAID ONLY THAT THIS REMAINS "HIGHLY SENSITIVE" ISSUE (PRESUMABLY BECUASE RAPPROCHMENT MUST CAUSE SOVIETS GREAT PAIN TO EXTENT THEY SEE ASAD GOING IN SADAT'S DIRECTION). FINALLY, HE SAID THAT IN DEALING WITH RICH ARAB STATES ASAD TAKES POSITION THAT CONFRONTATION STATES SHOULD TAKE MUCH HARDER LINE TO OBTAIN FUNDS AND WEAPONS. SADAT, ON OTHER HAND, FAVORS MORE MODERATE MANNER OF DEALING WITH RICH ARAB BROTHERS.

3. COMMENT. ABOVE VIEWS, WHICH ARE AT CONSIDERABLE VARIANCE WITH OFFICIAL VIEWS, WERE EXPRESSED AS "PERSONAL" BUT SOURCE ENJOYS WIDESPREAD CONTACTS IN CAIRO INTELLECTUAL AND MFA CIRCLES. IF ASAD SEES LITTLE PROSPECT FOR SUCCESS IN BRINGING AROUND PLO (PARA 4 REFTTEL) AND RECONVENING GENEVA, IT IS NOT SURPRIZING THAT HE IS PERMITTING SADAT TO LEAD ARAB "PEACE OFFENSIVE."
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